

Professor Dr. János Mócsy
(1895-1976)

Summary

Graduated veterinarian (1918), doctor medicinae veterinariae (1921), associate professor (1927), doctor habil medicinae veterinariae (1929), presenter of internal propaedeutic (1934), full professor (1936) and head of the Department of Internal Medicine at the Budapest High-School of Veterinary Science (and its predecessors' institutions) between 1935 and 1961. In 1950/1951 he was the Dean of the Veterinary Faculty of the Hungarian University of Agricultural Science, then when the Faculty was promoted to High-School of Veterinary Science in 1952 he was elected Director in two periods: 1954-1956 and 1957-1958. The Hungarian Academy of Science acknowledged his scientific work and innovations by electing him ordinary member in 1945. He was donated Kossuth Prize in 1951, the then highest state decoration for cultural-art-science deeds and achievements.

He has been one of the internationally known and recognised personalities of the Hungarian veterinary research, author and co-author of several textbooks of which some have been translated to several languages. He was the first veterinarian in Hungary who recognised and started researching the special aspects of health care and prevention in large-scale herds and flocks. He was outstanding teacher and exemplary pedagogue.



János Mócsy was born in November 30, 1895 in Kalocsa, Hungary. His father was school-teacher with a family of three children. He matured from the Budapest Piarist Gymnasium with insignia in 1913. In this same year he was admitted to the Hungarian Royal Veterinary High-School and given 800 Hungarian Krone scholarship per year. At the end of 1915 he was recruited into the army and sent to the Russian military front where he served as chief veterinarian of the German Carpathian Military Corp. He received his summa cum laude veterinary diploma in 1918. After graduation, between 1918 and 1922 he assisted as bacteriologist for **Prof. Dr. Aladár Aujeszky** at the Royal Hungarian Institute for Bacteriology. In 1921 he was qualified summa cum laude doctor medicinae veterinariae by presenting and defending his dissertation in anatomy (*The central nervous system of the domestic rabbit*).

Supported and proposed by **Professors Ferenc Hutýra** and **Károly Schaffer** he was elected to assistant by **Dr. József Marek**, the professor and head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine at the Royal Hungarian Veterinary School in 1922. Between 1923 and 1926 he went on long-lasting study trips in Western Europe, during which he visited veterinary colleges and institutions in Vienna, Munich, Leipzig, and Berlin. By the support of the Rockefeller foundation. He spent 10 months in veterinary/agricultural high-schools in Copenhagen and Hanover where he studied equine infectious anaemia.

In 1927 he was appointed to senior lecturer and in 1929 he qualified as Privatdocent in "clinical diagnosis of internal medicine". In 1934 he was presenter of medical propaedeutics and in 1935 he took over the Department of Internal Medicine and Clinic as head. In 1936 he was appointed to this same department full professor.

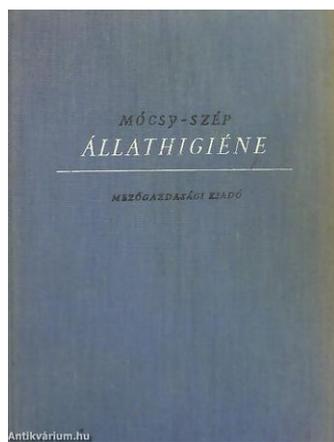
Professor Mócsy was blessed with unimpaired talents and diligence paired with broad literacy. His great predecessor **Professor József Marek** recommended him to the Senate of the High-School with the following phrase: "Mócsy is in possession of highly above average talents

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warranting him scuba-diving in different branches of veterinary research and blessed with possessing of exemplary assiduity and endurance that provide assurances for the development of veterinary internal medicine and makes him (in time) worthy representative of this branch of our profession.” This prophecy has become reality and in that historical quarter-of-century in which he worked he became honoured and internationally acknowledged successor of his great predecessor, József Marek.

His scientific work covered almost every area of internal medicine. In his early scientific carrier he dealt with the pathogenesis of diseases of parasitic origin, and later with the pathology of equine ataxic myoglobinuria. He conducted research in the field of veterinary toxicology and as its result his name has been associated with clarifying the semiology of many poisons. He established fundamental facts concerning the inoculability of infectious equine anaemia. He put forward evidence that there were possible risks attached to using subcutaneous tuberculin test. He later turned his attention to developing methods of protection against external parasites. He introduced the sheep-dip as treatment for scabies, and was the first to make use of per oral contact poisons against external parasites.

He was one of the firsts who recognised that multifactorial diseases due to housing and nutritional failures massively prevalent in large-scale livestock and poultry production systems cannot be successfully coped with mere medical treatments. He recognised also that complete health care of intensively kept large herds and flocks and prevention of multifactorial diseases exceeds the boundary of internal medicine and necessitates joint efforts from behalf of stake-holders of food animal production.



This recognition prompted him to establish in 1954 a *study group* within the frame of his Department from which few years later (1962) the independent *Department of Animal Hygiene* set its foundation. The study group and later the independent Department of Animal Hygiene have had his continuous surveillance and support. He was not only organiser but also researcher and tutor in the field of veterinary preventive medicine. All his activities resulted in publishing the first textbook in Hungary in the field of veterinary preventive medicine (Mócsy-Szép: *Allathigiéniá* i.e. *Animal Hygiene*, Mezőgazdasági Kiadó, Budapest, 1959. p. 554). His pioneering role and activities were acknowledged by presenting him *Honorary Membership* of the International Society for Animal Hygiene in 1973 at its first Congress. Actually, *he was the first* who was decorated by the highest award of this Society.

His other textbooks, e.g. *Clinical Diagnostics; Internal Medicine for Veterinary Surgeons and Students of Veterinary Science; Veterinary Clinical Diagnosis; A Collection of Prescriptions* etc. went into several editions. Together with **Rezső Manninger** he continued to revise the legendary “*Hutýra-Marek*” *textbook*, which under their names was published and translated into several languages and in many editions.

He received many awards including the most wanted and esteemed Kossuth Prize (1951, named after the Hungarian politician and revolutionary Lajos Kossuth), and was elected honorary doctor of several universities.

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He retired from the Veterinary High School in 1961 but remained active. For six years after his retirement he organised and directed the work of the Agricultural Section of the Hungarian Academy of Science which had been founded and governed by *József Marek* as its first president. Steering the Section gave him good opportunity to glitter his abilities, wisdom and life experiences. The members of the Section enjoyed and profited from his administrative work and his initiatives for innovations. Here has become famous his broad experiences with boundary territories of veterinary science, his colourful personality and multidisciplinary creativity.



His efforts improved the conditions of research in the Veterinary Research Institute and in other related institutes and academic departments. Thanks to his activity in 1967, the Hungarian Academy of Science elevated the research in the theme: “Veterinary aspects of large-scale animal production” to top priority which in-turn initiated broad research with considerable subsidy in the then University of Veterinary Science, Central and Regional Veterinary Institutes and in the Veterinary Research Institute.



Passing time enriches the inventory of his scientific, tutorial and human inheritance. His dear memory has been preserved by his disciples, his successors and by the whole society of Hungarian veterinarians. His deeds are echoed and remind us by his statue in the garden of the Budapest University of Veterinary Science and by the Mócsy Memorial Room at the Department of Internal Medicine and Clinic.

Professor Kovács ended his memorial address at the commemorative session organised on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Professor Mócsy’s death: “He meet the requirements indeed set forward by Schiller:

“Who measured up to the demands of his era, lived for all age!”

Budapest, 2017. January

Prof. Dr. Pál Rafai, DSC
Professor emeritus